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COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION

Committee 1 (Governance Issues)

Reform of the Union Project Group

Should the documents of UPU Councils and Congresses continue to be protected by passwords?

Berne, 2 November 2010 (15.00–18.00) and 3 November 2010 (9.30–12.30 and 15.00–18.00), Montgomery Blair Hall

Paper presented by the United States of America
(Agenda item 11)

1 Subject	**References/paragraphs**
Possible removal of the passwords that currently protect the documents of UPU Councils and Congresses posted on the UPU website.	§§ 1 to 10
2 Decisions expected	
Make comments on this document and decide whether to pursue the possibility of removing passwords on UPU documents posted on the UPU website.	

1   At the meeting of the Reform of the Union Project Group on 13 April 2010, the delegation of the United States of America raised the question of whether the UPU should continue to protect the documents of Congress, the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council with passwords on the UPU website (www.upu.int). The Project Group took note of this suggestion and asked the United States to prepare a document containing a concrete proposal or providing a series of options for discussion by the Project Group at this November 2010 meeting. The purpose of this document is to provide background information on the password protection of UPU documents on the UPU website and to put forward a set of options for discussion by the Project Group.

2   Currently, only individuals who obtain passwords from the IB can access Congress, CA and POC documents. Those eligible to obtain passwords are officials of postal regulators, postal operators or ministries responsible for postal affairs, and members of the Consultative Committee. While CA and POC resolutions are password protected, the Acts of UPU Congresses, once adopted, as well as decisions of Congress not affecting the Acts, are published on the UPU website following Congress. This means that anyone, anywhere, with the Internet can access the decisions of Congress – but not the proposals submitted to Congress, or Congress documents.

3   The decision to password protect UPU documents posted on the UPU website was taken in the mid-1990s when the IB first developed the www.upu.int website. A major driving force in the 1990s for protecting

UPU documents from free public access was the fact that some of the documents could contain sensitive commercial information.

4   Over the past 15 years, the UPU has evolved as an organization, and the reasons for password protecting UPU documents in the 1990s may no longer apply. Since the 1999 Beijing Congress, the UPU has embraced the participation of private sector stakeholders. Associations that represent mailers, equipment providers and delivery providers, such as FedEx and UPS, now participate in the work of both UPU Councils. One could argue that anyone who would ever have an interest in reading Congress, CA and POC documents is now authorized to obtain a password to download those documents.

5   With the more active participation of postal regulators in UPU deliberations in recent years, pressure has steadily grown for the UPU to conduct its deliberations in a more open and transparent manner. It would appear that postal regulators responsible for sustaining competitive (or even liberalized) postal markets in their home countries would not want to allow one operator (for example, the designated postal operator) to have access to UPU documentation that is denied to other operators.

6   In some countries, governments may wish to seek the views of the public or a wider range of stake-holders on UPU issues. The advice provided by these stakeholders can help governments develop positions on issues to be taken up by the CA, the POC or even Congress. In the United States, federal law requires the Department of State to maintain an Advisory Committee on International Postal and Delivery Services. The members of that committee are recognized experts in the field and represent a wide range of views. (The deliberations of the Advisory Committee, many of whose members are well known within the UPU, are published at www.state.gov/p/io/ipp/c25478.htm.) On account of their government status or association with the Consultative Committee, some of the Advisory Committee members have access to the CA, POC and UPU documents on the UPU website, while other members do not. It is possible that other UPU member countries maintain similar stakeholder organizations, to apprise their delegations to UPU meetings of the views of those interested in UPU issues.

7   In preparing this document, we thought it would be useful to examine the policies of other UN specialized agencies toward the password protection of their meeting documents. Our research to date, summarized in Annex 1, shows that, with the exception of the ITU, no other UN specialized agency password protects its meeting documents.

8   The options appear to be the following:

–   remove password protection on all documents posted on the UPU website, so that anyone, anywhere, can access the documents;

–   remove password protection on all CA and POC documents, but maintain password protection for Congress documents and proposals so that Congress itself can deliberate on this matter;

–   as an initial step, remove password protection of CA documents only, then revisit the possibility of removing password protection on POC and Congress documents at a later date, based on the experience gained in lifting password protection on CA documents;

–   maintain the status quo for the password protection of UPU documents posted on the UPU website.

9   Of the four options above, the U.S. delegation would recommend the third option (removing password protection of CA documents as an initial step), which appears to be a decision that the CA could take on its own. The POC and Congress could then take their own decisions on whether to password protect their documents posted on the UPU website.

10   Finally, it would seem that removing password protection of documents on the UPU website could significantly reduce the IB's workload. However, for this workload reduction to materialize, password protection might need to be removed from all documents posted on the UPU website, since IB staff would then no longer have to manage passwords.

Washington D.C., 23 August 2010

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Password protection of documentation by selected UN organizations

UN specialized agency	Password protection	Comments
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)	No	– Click on "Publications" link on left-hand side. – Click on desired link below "Free Publications". ("ICAO Doc Series" – unprotected access to documents.)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	No	– Click on "Documents & publications" link on bar at top. – On the left-hand side of the page, choose the appropriate governing body, then select the session and document.
International Labour Organization (ILO)	No	– Click on "Publications and research" under "What we do" on right-hand side. – Click on "Official reports" on left-hand side. – Click on desired session and documents.
International Maritime Organization (IMO)	Yes	– Click on "About IMO" at the top of the page. – Click on "Conference (Meetings and Documents)". – Click on "IMODOCS" to reach the Authority/Username/ Password site.
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)	Yes	
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	No	– Click on "Communication and Information" on top of home page. – Click on "Official documents" on right-hand side. Access to strategy documents, meeting documents and pro-gramme documents.
United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	No	– "As the leading international organization in the field of tourism, the World Tourism Organization undertakes large projects of research, analysis and data gathering within a variety of different segments and regions … These results are regularly released in numerous publications and pro-vide a valuable and reliable source of information. Though UNWTO regularly sends one copy of all publication to its 150 member states, it is the organization's objective to share all the achieved knowledge and information with a wider public." – "Otherwise, publications can be purchased online, or an application (with certain requirements) must be filled out to access the depository library."
World Health Organization (WHO)	No	– Click on "Publications" link on left-hand side. – Click on "Governance of WHO" link on right-hand side. – Select the body whose documents and reports you wish to view.

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UN specialized agency	Password protection	Comments
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)	No	– Click on "Resources for: Delegates" on left-hand side. – Includes a tool for "searching meetings and documents". – Enter document or meeting information, and the site automatically makes a search.
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	Yes (and No)	– Click on "Meetings" on left-hand side. – Click on "Constituent body sessions". – Select "Available documents" to view the desired documents. However: – Click on "Publications" on left-hand side. – Click on "Mandatory publications". – Click on "request form" and type in "wmo" for username and "publications" for password. – Fill out form for each request.